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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Orr Warns Premier Not to Compromise Rights

The President of Alliance Quebec, Royal Orr, called on Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa to provide "principled leadership" in the debate over the constitution and language matters. In a letter to the Premier, Mr. Orr expressed his deep concern over developments on two fronts: "At the federal level, politicians speak of compromise to bring Quebec into the Constitution; at the provincial level, you speak of compromise on signs to preserve social peace. In both cases what is compromised is the inviolability of human rights."

Mr. Orr challenged the Premier to reaffirm his party's commitment to "democratic and pluralistic values". He is concerned that the Liberals "... are setting the political and legal stage for a confirmation of injustice in the commercial signs issue and for a weakening of the protection of fundamental freedoms offered by the Canadian Constitution".

The President of Alliance recognized the provincial government's responsibility to protect the French language in Quebec. However, Mr. Orr cautioned that Alliance Quebec "... will not condone the infringement of fundamental rights of individuals within our community. Such an infringement is a possible consequence of the Constitutional deal you made with the other First Ministers at Meech Lake, and it seems to be the direction that your ministers are taking us in the signs debate".

Mr. Orr reminded the Premier that "the Quebec Court of Appeal judgment on signs offers a basis for advancing the protection of the French language while respecting the fundamental rights enshrined in the Quebec and Canadian Charters... Half measures that fail to recognize the principles that underline that decision are worse than no measures at all."

In concluding, the Alliance's President expressed his fear that "the honourable Canadian tradition of accommodation through compromise has been perverted into a compromising of rights for political ends." Such a compromise is unacceptable to Alliance Quebec, and to the English-speaking community.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS,
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